



Registered Charity No 1119599

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May 2025

Academic Dean's Report 2024 – 2025**Introduction**

It is hard to believe I have been in post for 2 years. I continue to enjoy the role and all the learning opportunities it provides, however, just when I think I am getting to grips with the role, new challenges present themselves! I remain inspired by those around me who work tirelessly to raise standards in forensic and legal medicine.

The team of Senior Officers and Office team have brightened up my Tuesday mornings, with much being achieved in these weekly meetings. The Senior Officers are supportive and offer wise counsel. Our Registrar has implemented many changes to improve resilience and manage risk.

We have an expanding team of dedicated examiners who, under the leadership of the hard-working Chief Examiner, Sandy Fielding, and the expertise of Angela Hall, our Educational Advisor, have facilitated the exams. We were delighted to appoint some Licentiate examiners and look forward to working with them over the coming years. We are in the process of recruiting another Educational Advisor and hope to appoint soon.

The DLM and Part 1 MFFLM and LFFLM were held on-line in October 2024. In March and April 2025, we held the SAQs for membership and, due to a change in format, for licentiate too. We also held all the OSCEs, both on-line and face-to-face for all membership and licentiate candidates during this period. We decided to move the face-to-face OSCEs back to March/April following feedback from candidates that the gap between the on-line OSCEs and the face-to-face OSCEs was too long. This year, we had an impressive number of applicants and many an hour was spent creating OSCE timetables to ensure we could accommodate all candidates.

Due to the large number of candidates and, following the negative press regarding other Colleges and their inaccurate results, our need is to ensure a robust marking system. We are still in the process of marking and reviewing the SAQ and OSCE examinations. We ask that our candidates bear with us as we ensure the results are reviewed to ensure accuracy.

We continue to review systems and ways to effectively manage increasing numbers of applicants as we look forward to adding the Secure and Detained settings (SDS) examination in October. Many thanks to all those in SDS who have worked hard to produce an examination.

Sadly, there has been little progress on the proposed dento-legal exams and the reinstatement of the medio-legal exams. A questionnaire designed by Professor Sarah Hull gave us valuable information about the appetite for MLAs to be part of the faculty. We



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plan to meet with the leads of the Medical Defence Organisations to make some final decisions.

This year we have appointed an expert witness lead, Professor John Gall, who has some exciting proposals to put forward at the next Board meeting. We thank John for his work in this role. His predecessor, Professor Keith Rix, sends out an expert witness newsletter which is always informative and thought provoking, if you wish to receive this newsletter, please let one of the office staff know and we can add you to the mailing list.

Last year we said goodbye to Professor Catherine White, who had been the Faculty Lead for Sexual Offence Medicine for many years. Her work in sexual offences and more latterly for the Institute for Addressing Strangulation (IFAS) has been incredibly powerful and we are delighted that IFAS have secured funding to continue in the valuable work they do.

This year Dr Marie-Elle Vooijs was appointed as Sexual Offence Lead and Dr Helen Mills as Deputy Sexual Offence Lead. Both have been incredibly busy in these roles and continue to represent the Faculty at key meetings. We are grateful for all the work they do and recognise the demands on their time.

We have recently appointed Dr Elisabeth Alton as Safeguarding Lead, which is a new role. Dr Alton has worked closely with Professor Margaret Stark offering educational opportunities in adult safeguarding for several years and we look forward to working more closely with her in this new role.

1. The Academic Committee (AC)

1.1 The AC has met (virtually) three times in the last year. The meetings have long agendas, so we have moved back to quarterly meetings. The meetings included reports and discussions on the subcommittees that report to AC:

- The Chief Examiner's Committee (CEC)
- The Forensic Science Subcommittee (FSCC)
- The Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC)
- The Training and Education Subcommittee (TED)
- The Research Subcommittee (RS)

1.2 The committee also receives reports from representatives of the FFLM on other outside committees. I thank all those involved for attending and reporting to us relevant information. These include:

- BMA Forensic and Secure Environments Committee
- RCGP Secure Environments Group
- NPCC Working Group on Rape & Adult Sexual Offences



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- National SARC Advisory Board
- Forensic Science Regulator's Medical Forensics Specialist Group
- Contamination Elimination Database Project (SARCs)
- NHSE SARC Strategic Clinical Forum
- Inter-Collegiate and Agency Domestic Violence Abuse
- Scottish Health in Custody Network
- NHSE Health and Justice CRG
- GMC Intercollegiate Ethics Forum
- RCPCH Standing Committee on Child Protection
- RCP's Student and Foundation Doctor Network
- NSPCC Healthcare Liaison Committee
- Drink and Drug Driving (D3) Practitioners Group update (Department for Transport)
- Review committee for National Guidance on the Retention, Storage and Destruction of Materials and Records relating to Forensic Examinations
- Forensic Examiner Capabilities Framework - Steering Group
- RCPCH Project Board for Purple Book
- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (Wales)

1.3 I would also like to thank those representatives of other bodies who attend the AC and add much to our deliberations. They are representing the following organisations:

- College of Paramedics
- Royal College of Nursing
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- UK Association of Forensic Nurses & Paramedics

2. The Chief Examiner's Committee (CEC) and FFLM examinations

- 2.1 The CEC has met several times, both as a full committee and various groups of examiners. A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes to make the examinations work. Every new question is 'Angoffed' and many hours are spent reviewing questions and exam weightings.
- 2.2 We are grateful for everything Angela Hall contributes, including the coordination of the excellent actors. Her expertise in running the OSCEs and picking and training the actors is vital. We appreciate all Kajal, and her team do in ensuring the OSCEs run smoothly.
- 2.3 Dr Jonathan Round was appointed as the Faculty's External Examiner in November 2020, and we thank him for his continuing input. His insights are invaluable, and he teaches us so much.



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2.4 Sandy Fielding and Kim Feltham have put in a considerable amount of work in the preparation of and running the exams. They have coped admirably with the increase in Part 2 applicants. Many thanks to you both.

2.5 Many thanks to everyone involved in the running of the exams, especially our examiners, Educational Advisors, and actors.

2.6 Exam Results:

October 2024

Exam	Overall No. of Passes	Overall No. of Fails	Overall No. of Candidates	Pass Rate
DLM	39	13	52	75.0%
LFFLM (GFM)	31	0	31	100.0%
LFFLM (SOM)	13	0	13	100.0%
MFFLM Part 1	5	5	10	50.0%

* Out of whom 27 achieved Distinction (reached the MFFLM pass mark)

The highest scoring DLM/MFFLM Part 1 candidate received a £250 prize sponsored by SceneSafe.

March 2025

In March we had:

- 2 MFFLM SAQ GFM applicants
- 6 MFFLM SAQ SOM applicants
- 35 LFFLM SAQ GFM applicants
- 20 LFFLM SAQ SOM applicants

- 0 MFFLM OSCE GFM applicants
- 5 MFFLM OSCE SOM applicants
- 36 LFFLM OSCE GFM applicants
- 18 LFFLM OSCE SOM applicants

We will release the results in due course.



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3. Forensic Science Subcommittee (FSSC)

Professor Margaret Stark continues to chair this committee with two meetings annually in June and November. The committee has many external members as well as Faculty members and deals with many queries and ongoing discussions about various topics. Much of the work goes on behind the scenes and a large amount of this is dealt with swiftly and efficiently by Margaret.

The FSSC continually updates and reviews its documents and a list of those produced or revised is below.

Recommendations for the collection of forensic specimens from complainants and suspects
Recommendations for the collection of forensic specimens from complainants and suspects – the evidence
FSSC Newsletter (July 2024 and January 2025)
Labelling forensic samples
FME form – complainant
FSSC Newsletter
Recommended equipment for obtaining forensic samples from complainants and suspects
Operational procedures and equipment for clinical and forensic examination rooms in police stations
Operational procedures and equipment for forensic medical examination rooms in Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)
Hair samples for toxicology
SARC Storage of Forensic Samples & the Human Tissue Act: FAQs
Recommendations on the order of ano-genital sampling when obtaining forensic specimens from complainants and suspects of sexual offences
Early Evidence Kit Consent and Sample Form
Early Evidence Kit Top Tips and Rationale
Collecting Early Evidence Flowchart

4. The Specialty Advisory Committee

This is chaired by Professor Carol Seymour and meets as and when necessary. The process for specialty application for forensic and legal medicine is a slow and frustrating one, but one we will continue to persevere with.



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5. The Training and Education Subcommittee (TED)

The subcommittee is currently under the chairmanship of Dr Libby Sevink. Libby has embraced her role as Vice-President for Forensic Medicine, and we are grateful for her contributions and enthusiasm as well as her efforts to increase webinar attendance.

Development Training Courses (DTCs)

5.1 The following DTCs have taken place since the last AGM:

Virtual SARC Best Practice Day	21 September 2024
Forensic Aspects of Adult Safeguarding	10 September and 03 October 2024
Virtual Child Safeguarding Day	09 November 2025
MFFLM and LFFLM Part 2 Revision Day	01 February 2025
Virtual Adult Safeguarding Day*	01 April 2025

**Free for FFLM Members and those working in the NHS to attend*

I would like to express my thanks to the course organisers for facilitating these - I appreciate a lot of time and effort goes into planning and running these events and we are grateful for their continued support.

Webinars

- 5.2 9 webinars have been held over the period May 2024 – April 2025. These were all free for FFLM members to attend. Many thanks to our speakers for presenting such a range of interesting topics.
- 5.3 Overall, the feedback on webinars continues to be positive and we welcome any suggestions for future topics and speakers.

Adult Safeguarding

- 5.4 The Forensic Aspect of Adult Safeguarding Forum, chaired by Dr Elisabeth Alton and Professor Margaret Stark, continues to meet quarterly.
- 5.5 The Virtual Adult Safeguarding Day in April 2025 was very well attended with over ? participants.

FFLM/Teesside University (TU) Course in General Forensic Medicine

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5.6 Due to decreasing numbers, the Faculty GFM course run in collaboration with the University of Teesside has been put on hold. We will be reviewing the structure of the course and considering ways to increase participation. Professor Sarah Hull and Professor Rudo Masanzu have been appointed as joint leads for this course.

5.7 TU's PgCert Advanced Forensic Practitioner Higher Apprenticeship (Custody or Sexual Offences) has sadly been withdrawn.

6. Research Subcommittee

We are delighted that our Research Subcommittee Chair, Professor Michael Freeman will be presenting again at our Annual Conference, being the worthy recipient of the David Jenkins Chair.

7. FFLM documents

7.1 The task of reviewing and renewing our large resource of documents is an ongoing project. We are grateful for all the efforts by Dr Remy Bahl in keeping the documents up to date.

7.2 Many thanks to the Senior Officers and Members who review and update our documents.

7.3 Over 45 publications have been reviewed since May 2024. They can be found on our Publications page here: <https://fflm.ac.uk/resources/publications>

8. Less Lethal Weapons Update

8.1 We continue to deliver our Clinician Assessment Training Course nationally. Since the last AGM, 10 courses have been delivered. Hundreds of clinicians have now attended this course, and feedback continues to be positive.

9. Other Work

There have been several other areas of activity including the following:

- The Appraiser Forum continues to meet twice a year to support appraisers who often work outside of organisations with clinical governance processes.
- Established links with Wessex Appraisal Service who are kindly preparing some material for us to support both appraisers and appraisees.

10. Conclusion



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In summary, it's been a busy, fulfilling year, and I am incredibly grateful for the support and expertise of those I work alongside. A special mention to the Senior Officers for their support and commitment and to the Office staff who really are the glue that hold the faculty together. We are incredibly lucky to have such a hard-working efficient Office team. Charlene, Tessa, Kim and Jordan- thank you, we'd be lost without you! To our wonderful outgoing President, you have taught me so much, and I thank you for your measured, calm leadership. To our incoming President and our new CEO, welcome, and I'm looking forward to working with you both.

Deryn Evans
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May 2025